Refund of money to the Government of Himachal Pradesh

1311. SHRIMATI VIPLOVE THAKUR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any request from Himachal Pradesh Government regarding refund of Rs. 41.75 lakh pending with the FCI on ground that State excise and taxation department has not issued exemption of sales tax on APL wheat;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether sales tax has already been deposited in the State exchequer;

(d) whether Government of Himachal Pradesh have made several requests to FCI to refund their amount but FCI has not paid any heed to their request;

(e) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(f) the steps taken by Government to resolve the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Food Corporation of India (FCI) have informed that they have received request from the Government of Himachal Pradesh for refund of Rs.41.75 lakh which includes Rs.15.09 lakh towards differential cost of wheat for sale under ITBP scheme out of Public Distribution System (PDS) stocks for the period from 15.12.1985 to 31.03.1986 and Rs.26.66 lakh on account of non-lifting of wheat during 2000-01.

(c) to (f) FCI have informed that out of Rs.15.09 lakh, an amount of Rs.0.95 lakh has already been deposited with the State exchequer and the balance amount of Rs. 14.14 lakh will be refunded after obtaining the approval of the Government. As regards refund of Rs.26.66 lakh, Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Department of Government of Himachal Pradesh has given the requisite undertaking to FCI in November, 2008 that the sales tax, if demanded by the State Excise Department will be paid by them. The matter is under consideration in FCI.

Strengthening the PDS

1312. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Planning Commission has pointed out that it was necessary at this stage for Government to strengthen public distribution system in the country and bring under its net a number of essential commodities;

(b) if so, whether Planning Commission has also pointed out that at present Government's policy was to attempt insulation of domestic prices from high world prices by combining a number of different measures including high subsidies, lower tariffs and export restrictions;

(c) if so, the main points in this regard;

(d) whether Government has considered them; and

(e) the steps being taken to implement them?